

AN
Historical and Succinct
ACCOUNT
OF THE LATE
RIOTS at the *Theatres*
OF
Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden.

INTERSPERSED

With the principal Letters and Advertisements that have been published on each Side the Question.

*—I will speak, tho' Hell itself should gape,
And bid me hold my Peace.—*

SHAKESPEAR.



LONDON:
Printed for W. MORGAN, in Pater-Noster-Row,
MDCCLXIII.

AN
HISTORICAL AND SUCCESSFUL
ACCOUNT

OF THE LATE
RIOTS at the Theatre
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INTERESTED
With the principal Histories and Anecdotes
which have been published on each
Side the Question.

8 14
— I will be glad to see you
And bid me bid you
SHAKESPEARE.



LONDON:
Printed for W. Moore, in Fleet-Street, near
St. Dunstons Church.

A N

Historical Account

OF THE

Riot at *Drury - Lane,*

Jan. 25, 1763.

ON the day of performance of the two gentlemen of Verona, the following hand-bill was delivered at all the public places and coffee-houses in London.

To the frequenters of the Theatres,

“GENTLEMEN,

“You have long complained, as individuals, of the unjustifiable innovation, introduced by the managers of the play-

B houses,

" houses, in advertising, ' That nothing
 " under the full price would be taken during
 " the performance.' But hitherto this im-
 " position has been carried on successfully,
 " as no one thought proper to take the
 " lead in rectifying so flagrant an abuse.
 " The public, for a long time past, though
 " dissatisfied, submitted to an additional tax,
 " upon producing entertainments, evidently
 " attended with extraordinary expence—
 " but will you acquiesce, gentlemen, in
 " this *insolent* extortion, without any other
 " pretence than new dressing the characters
 " of an old play in linsley woolsey; or re-
 " vivifying a spurious comedy, under the re-
 " spectable name of Shakespear. Perhaps
 " you have been told by the partizans
 " of our theatrical directors, that it has
 " been always customary to insist on the
 " full price, during the run of a new per-
 " formance of every species: this I deny
 " and insist on my own knowledge, that,
 " until a very moderate period, this privi-
 " lege

" lege was confined to a new panto-
 " mime. I likewise add on the same
 " certainty, that the managers did not ven-
 " ture on so *impudent* an attempt on the
 " public, at the representation of *Barba-*
 " *rossa Boadicia--the Apprentice--Agis--*
 " *the Upholsterer--the Englishman re-*
 " *turned from Paris--the Orphan of China--*
 " *or the Seige of Aquileia*——I do not ap-
 " prehend, that any one will be daring
 " enough to alledge, that an improvement
 " of the diversions of the theatre autho-
 " rises this increase of the prices. But
 " should such an outrage on your under-
 " standing be attempted, permit me to
 " rouse your indignation, by reminding
 " you, that we formerly could see, for
 " *four Shillings*, a play performed by
 " *Booth, Wilks, Cibber, Dogget, Norris,*
 " *Pinkethman, Johnson, Griffin, Porter,*
 " *Oldfield*—and are now obliged to pay
 " *five shillings*, for *half a play* performed
 " by *Garrick, Holland, Obrien, Blakes,*
 " *King*

“ King, Yates, Palmer, Bransby, Packer,
 “ Ackman, Cibber, and Yates. It is im-
 “ possible to draw the line, and determine
 “ where the imposition will end ; nor can
 “ any reasonable man take upon him to
 “ insure, that our Lords and Masters will
 “ not require *Opera prices* of the public,
 “ when they have fully established the
 “ present insult on their forbearance. One
 “ way only is left us, to obtain redress,
 “ which is, to assemble at the playhouses,
 “ and demand, with *decency* and *temper*,
 “ an explanation on this grievance, which
 “ I am certain, cannot be supported ; and
 “ owes its establishment to an opinion, that
 “ every imposition, not openly opposed, ac-
 “ quires the sanction of prescription.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your humble Servant,

An Enemy to Imposition.

“ The

" The reason of addressing the
 " town in this manner, is, that all com-
 " munication with the public, by the chan-
 " nel of News-papers, is cut off, through
 " the influence of *one of the Theatrical*
 " *Managers* ; who has found means to lay
 " that restraint upon the liberty of the
 " Press, which no MINISTER OF STATE
 " has hitherto been able to effect in this
 " country."

The following is a humorous de-
 scription * of the above hand-bill.

Such are the contents of this extraor-
 dinary address to the town, couched in
 the true Kilkenny dialect, " *Arrab now,*
 " *but hitberto this imposition has been car-*
 " *ried on successfully,—ay, but this I deny;*
 " *and insist upon my own knowledge, that*
 " *till very lately, this was never at-*
 " *tempted—* for pon my shoul now, the
 " *public for a long time past, submitted*

* Taken from a Pamphlet lately publish'd, intituled,
 an appeal to the public in behalf of the Manager.

" to, this additional tax — but tho' the
 " partizans of the managers say, it has
 " always been customary, I know upon the
 " same certainty now, that they took half
 " price at Barbarossa, Boadicia, &c. so
 " that these was no imposition at all — and
 " though it was always confined to a new
 " pantomime, evidently attended with ex-
 " traordinary expence, can an improve-
 " ment of the diversions of the theatre, au-
 " thorise the increase of the Price? no,
 " no; pon my shoul there can be no rea-
 " son in the world for it, for when Booth,
 " Wilkes and Cibber, all play'd to-
 " gether, they had but four shillings; and
 " yet there was no demand of full price
 " for pantomimes; for Booth never did
 " harlequin above once — and so the only
 " way is to assemble at the play-house,
 " and make a riot, in a decent manner;
 " and let nobody spake but ourselves, in
 " order to have an explanation of our
 " grievance" —

At
 taken from a Pamphlet lately published, intended
 an appeal to the public in behalf of the Managers.

At night the pit and boxes were filled with men, who soon began to cry for *Garrick, Garrick!* An actor appeared to tell them, a messenger was gone for him, and Mr. *Garrick* himself soon appeared before them: silence was at last with difficulty obtained, by the signals of a person in the centre of the pit, who seemed by his actions as if he proposed to speak; and when the noise was subsided, began to pour forth his oratory in the following vehement manner, addressing himself to Mr. *Garrick*—"I call on you in the name of the public to answer for your RASCALLY impositions" — The word RASCALL was immediately echoed thro' the House: the orator all this while continuing his violent action, cried,—"*Answer it, Sir; Answer me, Sir.*"—Mr. *Garrick* made some answer, but noise hindered our hearing it. But the orator hastily reply'd,—"*Speak to the audience, Sir; speak to the house,*"—To which the

ma-

manager attempted ; but for a long time in vain. At last, he asked "*for time to answer so sudden a charge ; that he had a partner to consult, who was then at a great distance.*" — He was then called on to read their paper—He said " he would do more than read it, he would answer it, if they would give him time." — This was denied him ; and peremptorily Yes or No, was demanded by the orator, who called on him as follows, "*Will you, or will you not, admit the public at half prices, to all entertainments, except the first winter of a new pantomime ?*" — To this the manager answered as before — that he desired time to consult his partner—and to answer a question of that importance — but he would lay his answer before the public in a few days — which very greatly enraged them — and the manager, after standing their hissings some time, bowed and retired.

After

After some time spent in noise and uproar, the great majority of unprejudiced persons in the house, were desirous the play should be no longer interrupted ; and called loudly for it. — The actors appeared several times, but were obliged to retire from the clamour and outrage of the rioters. — And thus it continued till eight of the clock, when the ladies were called on by them to retire—that the house might be burnt and destroyed, as was the voice of several of those enraged heroes. — The glass lustres were broke, and the lighted candles fell to the ground. When the mischief was done to the boxes and pit, a magistrate appeared with a guard ; upon which the rioters thought proper to decamp, and so the affair ended for that night.

We cannot help remarking, what a contradiction of behaviour this was to what they promised in their hand-bill—

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where

where they say — “ One way only is left us to obtain redress, which is to assemble at the play-houses, and demand, with *decency* and *temper*, an explanation of this grievance.—No *prologue*, till Mr. *Garrick* comes on—off—off—off.— Mr. *Garrick* appears, bowes submissively ; but is not allowed to speak—Did you not call for him to be heard ?—Remonstrances are vain ; mischief must be done, to testify the resentment of the town.—The benches are torn up — the sconces broke — the actors pelted — the chandeliers destroyed, and all is anarchy and confusion.—This is the equitable manner in which the *town* makes theatrical regulations !

It was asserted in the house, that the same game was play'd, at the other house, and that Mr. *Beard* had been on the stage, and given up the point — but it was a false report.

The

The next day, Jan. 26, the following advertisement appeared in the Public advertizer.

“ The Managers of Drury-lane theatre,
 “ having been suddenly called upon, last
 “ night, to answer the charge of an inno-
 “ vation in regard to their prices, Mr.
 “ Garrick acquainted the audience, *that*
 “ *He was not conscious that the managers had*
 “ *done anything in this respect, in which they*
 “ *were not fully authorised by the established*
 “ *usage of theatres; and that if there had*
 “ *been the slightest innovation, it should be*
 “ *rectified:* and this unexpected complaint
 “ being grounded on the assertions con-
 “ tained in a printed paper, which had
 “ been, the same day, industriously circu-
 “ lated in coffee-houses, and distributed
 “ through every part of the theatre, Mr.
 “ Garrick promised to publish a full
 “ answer to the charges contained in that
 “ paper; but the clamour still continuing,
 “ the performance of the play was entirely
 “ pre-

“ prevented? the managers, therefore find
 “ themselves under the necessity of in-
 “ forming the public, that a full and satis-
 “ factory answer will be published ac-
 “ cordingly; and it is hoped that they
 “ will, with their usual candour, suspend
 “ their judgment on this occasion, till the
 “ appearance of such answer, which will
 “ be in a few days.”

The bills of Elvira also were posted
 up for the sixth night, for the benefit of
 the author, with nothing under the full
 price.

The rioters were again assembled at
 the theatre, and the manager when cal-
 led for, came upon the stage with a full
 resolution to comply with their com-
 mands. Yet they would not hear him
 speak. He stood sweating upon the stage
 near twenty minutes before he was per-
 mitted to say Yes.

In

In the performance of the tragedy, a scene drew and discovered Mr. *Ackman** among the train, attending on the King, the rioting gentry immediately called him forth — he came forward, and said, “ he was extremely sorry he had done any thing, to give offence to the gentlemen ; that it was far from his intention, and humbly asked them par-

* On the first night when the rioters were determin'd upon mischief, two of the actors, namely, Ackman and Moody run round the Boxes to see what was doing, and the sight of them made the rioters suspect they were sent as spies. But Moody did more. He saw a Gentlemen strike the glass Lustre, and down fell the candle a-light, which another slyly shoved with his foot against the wainscot.——This candle Mr. Moody put out, and kept his eye upon the person, when the magistrate with the guard appeared, he pointed him out to be apprehended, but his Brethren either bribed or shouldered the soldiers, that the person escaped.

don'

“ don”—Upon which he was pardoned, and walked back to his place. — They then called for Mr. *Moody*, and were told, he had nothing to do at the house that night, and was not there; the rioters immediately cried, “ send for him—we will have him—send for him.” — Nor would they suffer the play to go on till one of the actors told them, he should be sent for.—At the end of the act, *Moody* was again loudly called for, and in a little time appeared; and after the noise which the sight of him occasioned was quelled, he said, “ *Gentlemen, if my saving the house last night from being burned, was an offence, I ask your pardon.*”—and went off—at which the whole house roared out to bring him back—and he appeared again, every one cried out, *knees, knees! down on your knees!* *Moody* finding that nothing but going on his knees would

would satisfy them, he clapt his hand on his breast, and walked off, in seeming contempt of their demand.—The manager was then called for to order his discharge, which he did, and was applauded for it; and so ended the disturbance of that night.

AN



A N

Account of the R I O T

A T

Covent-Garden Theatre,

February 24.

ON Thursday the following hand-bill,
was printed, and deliver'd as before,
at all public places in London.

To the frequenters of theatres,

Gentlemen,

“ In defiance of the regulation which
“ your resolution and steadiness, lately
“ established at Drury-lane theatre, and
“ in which it was universally understood,
“ that the managers of the other theatre
“ had

“ had fully acquiesced, there appeared
 “ this day advertised, the opera of AR-
 “ TAXERXES, with this remarkable no-
 “ tice, viz. *Nothing under the full price*
 “ *CAN be taken.*” It now therefore be-
 “ hoves you, gentlemen, to enforce your
 “ decision, and convince the directors of
 “ *Covent-garden playhouse*, that a point
 “ once determined by the tribunal of the
 “ public, must and shall for ever remain
 “ a law, subject to no alteration, but by
 “ their own authority.

I am, gentlemen,

Your humble servant,

An enemy to imposition,”

And at night when the curtain drew up,
 the Audience would not suffer the opera
 to begin till Mr. *Beard*, came on the
 stage, and gave them a categorical answer,
 Yes or No, concerning the taking of half
 prices: from six in the evening till past
 nine, several messages and speeches passed,

D

but

but not any that, the Audience thought satisfactory. A gentleman in the pit declared that they ought to submit in this to the town, especially as they had, a precedent in Mr. *Garrick*, the greatest theatrical genius. At about half an hour after nine, they grew so exasperated, that the benches of the two shilling gallery, the fore part of it, the seats and linings of the boxes, the glasses, chandeliers, and every thing they could come at, were pulled to pieces; and the stage was full of those who left the boxes and pit; they did not leave the house till half past ten.—The damage is computed at 2000l.

The next day, Feb. 25, the following advertisement appeared in the Public, and Daily advertizers.

Covent-garden Theatre, Feb. 25, 1763.

Whereas a very unjustifiable disturbance happened last night at this theatre; the managers think it incumbent upon them

them to acquaint the public, that when the opera of Artaxerxes was in rehearsal, it was determined, that no expence should be spared to render the performance as elegant as the nature of so peculiar an entertainment would admit—this design occasioned so considerable an increase of the nightly charge, as was thought by many disinterested persons, would justify additional prices; but to avoid giving the least umbrage, and ingratitude for the public indulgence on other occasions, no such advance was attempted—when it is known that the extraordinary nightly expence attending this performance, amounts to upwards of fifty pounds, it is humbly apprehended, no persons of justice and candour, will think the full price an exorbitant gratification for such unusual disbursements: the managers therefore, flatter themselves, that a resolution to oppose the arbitrary and illegal demands of a particular set of persons (contrary to the general sense of the audience) will not

be deemed arrogant or unreasonable, especially when those demands are enforced by means subversive of private property, and in violation of that decorum which is due to all public assemblies.

In answer to it, Saturday's Public Ledger produced the following.

To the frequenters of theatres.

Gentlemen,

Your conduct last night, has been insolently stigmatized by the managers of Covent Garden theatre, in an advertisement, inserted in the public and daily advertizers; *a very unjustifiable disturbance, raised to enforce the arbitrary and illegal demands; of a particular set of persons, contrary to the general sense of the audience.* An insult so outrageous upon the public in general, and the audience of last night in particular, cannot fail to excite the indignation, of every gentleman present, on that occasion, more especially as he must feel, that the assertion, contained in the parenthesis

parenthesis, is *notoriously false*; it evidently appearing, that it became, long before any mischief was done, or attempted: the general opinion of the house, that the manager ought not to insist upon an exemption, in *any* instance, from the late regulation established at the other theatre.

With respect to the allegation that an extraordinary increase of expence attends the representation of the opera of Artaxerxes; it would be perhaps sufficient to answer, that the money expended in dressing the characters of a new tragedy, in extra robes, has not been allow'd as a reason to insist on full price, as the performance of a new piece; which rarely goes beyond nine nights, three of which being assigned to the author, may (if the above reasoning with respect to the opera in question be subscribed to,) be likewise added to the nightly expence of such entertainment.

But

But in order to obviate any impression, that an exaggerated account of the additional charges attending this exhibition, may possibly have on the mind of persons, but little acquainted, with theatrical matters, and who implicitly credit every assertion delivered with confidence and plausibility, it may not be improper to require the managers of Covent Garden theatre, to answer the following Queries, viz.

Quere 1. Whether they have not purchased the dresses used in this opera of Dr. Arne for one hundred and forty pounds, being less than half the original cost?

Q. 2. Whether they could have dressed a new tragedy in Asiatic, or Roman dresses, for the same money?

Q. 3. Whether any further extra-
or

ordinary charge has been incurred by the additions of the orchestra ?

Pinto, nominally	3l.	3s.	}	£. 2	2
really	—	—			
Soderini,	—	—		1	1
4 Répianos,	—	—		2	2
2 Tenors,	—	—		1	1
Bassoon,	—	—		1	1
Violoncelles	—	—		1	1
2 Weyfells, Hautboys, and	}		}	1	16
Clarionets,					
Double Bass,	—	—		1	4

Q. 4. Whether in stating the account of their expences, they can with the least appearance of candour, charge the salaries of Seignor Tenducii and Paretio, solely to the night of performing Artaxerxes ? And whether there be any merit in reserving those performers for that single purpose ?

Q. 5

Q. 5. Whether the nightly expences of the present managers are superior to those engaged in by Mr. Rich, the season, that he employ'd, the following performers, viz,

Mr. <u>Quin</u> , at	—	—	£ 700
Mr. <u>Garrick</u> ,	—	—	700
Mrs. <u>Cibber</u> (supposed)	—		700
Mrs. <u>Pritchard</u> , unknown			
Mr. <u>Woodward</u> , ditto			

And if not, upon what pretexts *they* can INSIST ON terms, which *he* did not presume to ASK ?

Q. 6. Whether if Mr. Garrick should think proper to retire from the stage, and be occasionally induced to perform for a consideration of fifty pounds a night, that circumstance of unusual expence would be admitted a reason to lay an additional tax on the public ?

Q. 7.

Q. 7. Whether there is any probability of room for latter account, on any night of the representation of Artaxerxes this season?

Q. 8. Whether the managers do not contend the point in question from no other motive, but the hopes of being able to establish a precedent, under the sanction of which they may be able to counter-work the law lately established by the public at Drury-lane theatre?

Lastly. Upon what foundation can they ground their hopes, that *they* shall be able to obtain an indulgence, denied to Mr. GARRICK, deservedly the greatest favourite of the stage.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your humble servant,

Feb. 25.
1763.

An enemy to imposition.

E

The

And the undermentioned case was printed in Tuesday's, March 1st, Public Advertizer.

The C A S E concerning the late Disturbance at Covent-Garden Theatre, fairly stated and submitted to the sense of the public in general.

AS the opposition to *full price* at Drury - Lane theatre was first founded upon the pretence of it's having been exacted on unjustifiable occasions, it was imagined, that let what would be the event of that dispute the *managers* of Covent-Garden ought in no sort to be affected by it, as no such complaint had ever been pretended against them; yet, when Mr. Garrick thought proper to wave his private advantage, for the
fake

fake of the public peace, it was deemed necessary for the same laudable purpose, to perform such pieces only for the present at Covent Garden, as could by no means bring the point, which had been so lately and so violently agitated, into immediate debate again, and even latter account was taken to *LOVE IN A VILLAGE*.

When the Opera of *ARTAXERXES* was revived (a piece as distinct from the common course of business as even an *Oratorio* itself) it was generally understood, the peculiarity of the performance, together with the apparent extraordinary expence attending it, would sufficiently exempt it from the limitations which had been prescribed at the other Theatre; accordingly it was advertised, in the same manner it had ever been, at *full price*.

Mr.

—Mr. Beard received some private hints the evening before the intended representation, though not till after the bill was sent to the press, that an opposition was intended by some particular persons ; but flattered himself that the candour and justice of the *public in general* would distinguish in a case so particularly circumstanced ; and when he was called upon the stage, would have humbly offered such reasons, as, had they been calmly and dispassionately heard, might possibly have prevented the violence which ensued. In this he was continually prevented by an incessant and clamorous demand of a general and decisive *Yes* or *No*.—As *manager* only, and *Trustee* for other *Proprietors*, he thought himself totally unimpowered to resign up their rights by so sudden and concise a conveyance ; and, as the point in dispute was an essential matter of *Property*, conceived their con-
cur-

currence absolutely necessary to any determination on his part, which, at this juncture, was impossible to be obtained — In this difficult situation where *acquiescence* subjected him to a breach of that trust which had been reposed in him, and *refusal* exposed him to insult and displeasure, his submitting rather to the *latter*, than be guilty of the *former*, it is hoped will be deemed an offence not altogether worthy so *severe* a resentment.

However unfortunately he may have incurred the imputation of insolence, obstinacy, or at least imprudence, in not immediately submitting to the demands proposed ; yet when it is considered, that these demands were enforced by part of the audience only, and that he had then great reason to believe such submission would be very far from producing

ducing the salutary effect of theatrical tranquility, he may not perhaps be judged so blameable.

Mr. Beard had at that time received several anonymous threatening letters, and notices concerning many other branches of what they called reformation—He was ordered by one to add a farce to *LOVE IN A VILLAGE*, or the house should be pulled about his ears.—By another, he was commanded to put a stop to the farther representation of that opera, upon the penalty of enforcing his compliance, by a riot the next night of performance; and very lately received certain information of meetings which have already been held, and an association forming, to reduce the prices at the theatre to what they were forty years since, though it is notorious the

expence of theatrical entertainments are more than doubled. For these reasons : he looked upon the occasion of the present disturbance only as a prelude to future violence ; as the first, not the last salutation of this extraordinary kind, to be expected ; and apprehended, that too easy an acquiescence might possibly prove rather encouragement than prevention.

(Nevertheless, in gratitude for the many favours and indulgences received from the *publick*, and from an earnest desire to promote that order and decorum so essential in all public assemblies, the proprietors have now jointly authorized Mr. Beard to declare, that they shall think themselves equally bound with the managers of the other
Theatre

Theatre, to an observance of those limitations which they have agreed to.

Mr. Beard, though sensible how unworthy an object his character is, for the attention of the *publick*, yet hopes his zeal to have it appear in a fair light, will not be deemed impertinence, and therefore begs leave to mention one occurrence that relates particularly to himself.

It has been industriously reported, that both before and after Mr. Garrick's submission to the point in dispute, he himself had expressly promised to give it up likewise, but has now insolently dared to resume a right, which he had already disclaimed. How incapable Mr. Beard is of such a conduct, he flatters him-

himself those who know him will testify: to those who do not, it may not be unnecessary solemnly to declare, That so far from ever making such a promise, he constantly insisted, that it neither was in his power or intention to comply with the demand.

JOHN BEARD.

On Thursday, March 3, the house was opened for the performance of *The Inconstant*, or *The Way to Win Him*, which was advertized as usual.

In justice due to the managers, who indeed have acted more honourably, and with greater candour, than perhaps we
 F ourselves

the

ourselves might, in such a case, have done, obliges us to insert the following advertizement, which appeared under that of the play.

Covent-Garden Theatre.

“ It having been maliciously reported, that a return of money was refused on the night of the late disturbance at this theatre; the managers think it necessary to assure the public, that principal part of the money was returned the same evening, as the remainder would have been, had it not been prevented by some hundreds of persons forcing in, and the office-keepers being drove from their posts by the violence of the tumult: upwards of forty pounds have since been repaid to those who have been pleased to apply for it, and the residue remains in the hands of the

the stage-door-keeper for the same purpose."

At the time of performance, when the curtain drew up, the audience began calling for Mr. Beard, who immediately appeared; and they then desired to know, If he would release the rioters then in custody, and drop all prosecutions against the persons concerned in the late riot? Which Mr. Beard said, He would, as far as he himself could promise. But they were not satisfied; and told him, That he must promise them to do it intirely and effectually. Upon which Mr. Beard left the stage: and returned again in about a quarter of an hour, when he fairly promised to stop all proceedings against them.

F I N I S.

the first of the series of the last
part.

At the time of performance, when the
certain drew up, the audience began calling
for Mr. Brand, who immediately appeared
and they then desired to know if he would
release the rioters then in custody, and
drop all prosecutions against the persons
concerned in the late riot? Which
Mr. Brand said, He would, as far as he
himself could promise. But they were
not satisfied; and told him, That he
must promise them to do it entirely and
effectually. Upon which Mr. Brand left
the stage: and returned in about
a quarter of an hour, when he said
promised to stop all proceedings a-
gainst them.